

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 9317

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MPOL, AU
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER INTERPRETS AUSTRIAN STATE TREATY MISSILE
BAN

REF: VIENNA 8584

1. AUSTRIA'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, WILLIBALD PAHR, HAS OFFERED HIS INTERPRETATION OF STATE TREATY ARTICLE 13 BAN ON MISSILES IN RESPONSE TO REPORTERS'S QUESTIONS CONCERNING SOVIET VIEWS IN LIGHT OF RECENT "RED STAR" ARTICLE QUESTIONING LEGALITY OF POSSIBLE AUSTRIAN PURCHASE OF ISRAELI INTERCEPTORS AND POSSESSION OF RECKET WEAPONS. PAHR'S INTERPRETATION WAS BASICALLY THAT OF DEFENSE MINISTER LUTGENDORF AS REPORTED REFTEL.

2. PAHR TOLD NEWSMEN THAT PURCHASE OF INTERCEPTORS WAS

PURELY MILITARY AND COMMERCAIL MATTER, TO BE MADE IN CONNECTION WITH "OBLIGATION OF ARMED NEUTRALITY" UNDERTAKEN BY AUSTRIA IN CONNECTION WITH STATE TREATY. PAHR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD ARTICLE 13 AS OBLIGATION TO REFRAIN ONLY FROM ACQUIRING LONG AND MEDIUM-RANGE MISSILES AND MISSILES OF AN OFFENSIVE NATURE, AND HE NOTED THAT AUSTRIA HAD
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ALREADY PURCHASED ROCKET WEAPONS, INCLUDING GROUND-

GROUND AND AIR-GROUND MISSILES, FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA
IN 1957 WITHOUT STATE TREATY SIGNATORIES (USSR, UK,
FRANCE, US) HAVING RAISED ANY OBJECTIONS.

3. IN FURTHER DEVELOPMENT ON THIS ISSUE, SALZBURG
MILITARY COMMANDER, COLONEL GASSLHUBER, AT
NOVEMBER 5 PRESS CONFERENCE REPORTEDLY SUGGESTED
THAT AUSTRIA IGNORE STATE TREATY BAN ON MISSILES
AND PURCHASE ANTI-TANK AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT ROCKETS.
HE PREDICTED THAT STATE TREATY SIGNATORIES WOULD
REACT ONLY WITH PROTEST NOTES AND ASSERTED FURTHER
THAT AA MISSILES COULD SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPENSIVE
INTERCEPTORS. IN WAKE OF PRESS REACTION TO
GASSLHUBER'S REPORTED COMMENTS, OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT
SOURCES QUOTED IN NOVEMBER 9 PRESS, SAID THAT GASSLHUBER ONLY SAID
ACQUISITION OF SYSTEM OF SMALL (LIMITED RANGE) MISSILES WOULD NOT
CAUSE ANY DRAMATIC PROTESTS BY STATE TREATY SIGNATORIES
AND THAT HE HAD NOT CALLED FOR IGNORING STATE TREATY
MISSILE BAN.

4. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES, NEITHER
FOREIGN NOR DEFENSE MINISTRY HAS RECEIVED SOVIET
PROTEST CONCERNING AUSTRIAN POSSESSION OR FURTHER
ACQUISITION OF ROCKET WEAPONS OR INTERCEPTORS EQUIPPED
WITH MISSILES BUT SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAVE MADE
FURTHER "INQUIRIES" AT BOTH MINISTRY AND CHANCELLERY
LEVELS. AUSTRIANS THUS PROCEEDING AS PREDICTED
REFTEL, I.E. SUPPORTING DEFENSE MINISTER'S POSITION
THAT TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS REQUIRE ACQUISITION
OF DEFENSIVE MISSILES IN SUPPORT OF EFFECTIVE POLICY
OF ARMED NEUTRALITY, AND ASSUMING DE FACTO
REINTERPRETATION OF TREATY HAS BEEN EFFECTED PENDING
POSSIBLE SOVIET REACTION. BUCHANAN

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